In Focus........Nonviolence in Israel-Palestine........
EMERGENCE magazine is a monthly e-magazine by the Metta Center dedicated to sharing stories about nonviolence movements worldwide.

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OUR MISSION

Our mission is to promote the transition to a nonviolent future by making the logic, history, and yet-unexplored potential of nonviolence more accessible to activists and agents of cultural change (which ultimately includes all of us). We focus on root causes (sometimes called “upstream” causes) to help people in any walk of life discover their innate capacity for nonviolence and use it more strategically for long-term transformation of themselves and the world. We work to challenge and replace the prevailing worldview with a much higher image of humanity informed by nonviolence and its implications for the meaning of life and value of the person.

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Dr. Mona El-Farra, medical doctor and associate of the Middle East Children’s Alliance, recently made headlines on Democracy Now! with her plea to end the military assault on Gaza with one powerful statement: “We are human beings.” She is, of course, absolutely right. Human beings live in Gaza, and it seems like nothing could be more obvious—if not human beings, then who or what does? And why are we paying attention? Of course, what she is really saying is something much deeper. She’s saying that to the people in Gaza, it seems like we have somehow forgotten that human beings are there—and that raises more questions. For example: How could one forget the humanity of another and what does it tell us about who we really are?

For insight into these questions, we might first explore the basic dynamic of conflict escalation. Conflict, in itself, is not at issue—it’s the image we have of the human beings with whom we engage in conflict. Michael Nagler, president of the Metta Center for Nonviolence, maintains in his 2014 book, The Nonviolence Handbook: A Guide for Practical Action, that conflict escalates—that is, moves increasingly toward violence—according to the degree of dehumanization in the situation. Violence, in other words, doesn’t occur without dehumanization.

Nagler’s thinking about violence was partially influenced by sociologist Philip Zimbardo, who famously conducted an experiment in controlled dehumanization at Stanford in 1971. What happened? He and his students created a prison scenario where some students took the role of the guards and the others as the prisoners. Zimbardo told the guards to make the prisoners feel isolated and that “they had no power.” In six days, he used his better judgment and called off the experiment because the situation had become too psychologically real, even close to torture for some involved. One minute, they’re regular Stanford students ready to cooperate with one another for a project. The next, they’re locked in a victim-aggressor dynamic where common humanity was cast aside, making violence possible. In order to see human beings—to humanize—we need the conditions for it. When you think of human beings in the world, what do you see? Do you see a “friendly universe,” as Albert Einstein called it? He understood the utter practicality of this question, arguing that if we see an unfriendly universe, we see unfriendly beings living in it. In a dehumanized world of scarcity and competition we will use all of the tools and inventions we have to protect ourselves from one another. It’s hard in a world of separation to “remember your humanity and forget the rest,” as Einstein said. Why is that?

Look around you—at advertisements, television programs, and the news—and you will find that there is one image of the human being that dominates, and he’s not very friendly. He is violent, greedy, hateful and only happy when things are going well for him. He’s really quite superficial—his face is ecstatic when he saves on his car insurance and his voice is monotonous when he reports on war. He’s obsessed...
with violence and hungry for more. We see and hear these images, some say between 2,000 and 5,000 times a day in urban areas world-wide. Eventually, we internalize it. We come to think that this is who we are too. We see it so often, our minds stop distinguishing between ourselves and what is being projected at us.

Dehumanization, again, is a backdrop making violence possible — both directly, like a bomb, and structurally, like exploitation. By constantly imprinting that negative image of the human being in our minds, even if we don’t perpetuate direct violence, we certainly can’t deny that we live under the institutions that inflict violence on others for us, be it corporations, the military or the police. These violent structures do not go away because they appear to fulfill necessary functions, like protecting us from each other. In this framework, there is little need for discussion about the alternatives — such as unarmed peacekeeping or restorative justice — because they are simply not telling the story we believe about who we are and what makes us safe. A low human image is dangerous precisely because it manipulates our sense of well-being and security. It is also extremely profitable for some. Ask anyone who sells weapons, builds prisons, or convinces women to wear makeup that covers their “imperfections.”

We’ve been made desperate: We’ll do or buy anything that promises to restore our humanity to us, so long as it’s convenient. We’re lazy, too, you know, or so we’re told.

Taking a cue from Einstein, then, the most urgent struggle of today is to reclaim the human image and restore its dignity. Listen to what Meir Margalit, former elected member of the Jerusalem City Council for the Meretz Party and a founder of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, said only a week ago: “We are demonstrating not only for Gaza, but to try and save the human condition.”

The Xhosa concept of ubuntu, combined with the Arabic word intifada — as seen in this graffiti on the “separation” wall in Bethlehem — roughly translates to mean: uplifting human dignity through nonviolence. (WNV / Stephanie Van Hook)
And violence, unfortunately, just can’t do that. If it could, we wouldn’t be where we are today, believing that while a war unfolds this is just the way that human beings operate. Sorry, there is nothing you can do but pull up a chair and watch if you’d like. Nonviolence, on the other hand, is a different story. If dehumanization is the background for violence, a higher human image is the necessary condition for nonviolence. The story begins when we recognize that we suffer when others suffer. Psychologist Rachel MacNair expanded upon the widely known Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD, diagnosis to include what she named Perpetration-Induced Traumatic Stress, or PITS. She makes this distinction because PTSD, she argues, is generally thought to include the victims of violence and those who have been party to what one might think of as a “gruesome act” or “atrocities,” though it tends to stop short of the analysis of what she refers to as “the ordinary killing of traditional combat.” In other words, she is showing that violence cannot be fully normalized — it registers somewhere in our psyches as trauma, and not only in the most extreme cases. Call it what we want, PITS or PTSD, the fact that we experience deep anxiety and traumatize ourselves when we inflict suffering on others is actually an extremely hopeful comment. It shows that our interconnectedness with and sensitivity to one another is ennobling. It shows that while human and dignity sometimes seem like an oxymoron today, they are actually synonymous. And it’s time that we recognized them as such.

Despite its being, as I argue, native to our human condition, nonviolence is a new meme. Gandhi saw this when, in 1908, he coined the word satyagraha. It had a practical value, being a new term that would serve to distinguish the form of resistance in which he was engaging from conceptions of passivity. Satyagraha was something new, something more deeply transformational and tied to an implicit faith in human nature. The Sanskrit word was built of two parts: satya, which means truth, that which is, or even more simply, reality; and a-graha, to grasp, hold to oneself. In nonviolence, we are clinging to our shared dignity as human beings. We are grasping, not illusion, but reality itself. What is that reality? Indigenous wisdom often recognized it. The Xhosa concept ubuntu popularized by Desmond Tutu during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the 1990s in South Africa is roughly translated, “Through other human beings, I become human.” This is restoring a fuller sense of what it means to be human. It is not a question of our physical characteristics; instead, it takes a person and elevates her nature from “all you can understand is violence” to “I can only affirm my humanity through other people,” which is not possible through violence. This is more than a political uprising, or intifada, it’s a call to uplift human dignity through nonviolence. To quote from graffiti I saw this past June on the so-called security wall in Bethlehem, it’s an “ubuntifada.”

We may need to draw strength from our imaginations as we resist dehumanization, keeping our eyes on the problem without de-meaning the person. But what greater purpose can the imagination serve than to help us do that? Carol Flinders affirms that it is one of the most powerful tools of our nature when she writes, “Imagination seems to be a vital component of genuine nonviolent resistance, for it allows us to hold on to a positive view of ourselves no matter what the world tells us we are.”

The world is telling us that we have no power, that we only care about ourselves and that we can only get dignity through violence; in effect, we are not human beings. Don’t believe it. We are human beings and that makes us powerful, because only human beings working together are capable of transforming the violence that degrades us all.
Our world is torn by conflict, and the conflict over Israel-Palestine may well be not only the most dangerous – because it’s the eye of the storm in the Middle East – but the most intractable. Each side dehumanizes the other, rendering dialogue all but impossible. Extremists on both sides now seem bent on destruction, not just conquest, of the other – and over all hangs the heavy weight of a superpower, fueling one side with virtually unlimited weaponry and shielding it from the international censure that might have provided some restraint.

So where do we begin? We might begin by pointing out to whomever will listen that Israel-Palestine may be the world’s most glaring example of the futility of violence. Sixty years of the most overwhelming military power have not only not brought Israel security, they have pushed the Gazans, in particular, to a state of such desperation that they would rather die fighting than be starved – starved of the necessities of any decent life, including dignity and meaning, by an illegal blockade. More tragically still, and more ominously for any hope of peace, the conflict has steadily eroded the Jewish values that held Judaism together in its diaspora for two thousand years. The Jews have survived two thousand years of persecution; I doubt they will survive many more as the persecutors. If there was ever a situation that cried out for a radical change of vision, it is this one.

The beginnings of such a vision are, fortunately, not absent in either Israel or Palestine. Take the long-standing village of Neve Shalom/Wahat as-Salam, “Oasis of Peace,” where sixty families, half of them Jewish and half Palestinian-Arab, Christian or Muslim, live out the founder’s vision to “live in peace, each one faithful to his own faith and traditions, while respecting those of others.” 300 families are on the waiting list to join this experiment. While in Jerusalem, recently, I spoke with Rabbis for Human Rights, one of the hundreds of peace groups in the country, and met with a young couple who practice dialogue and reconciliation groups; a few days later I was in Bethlehem, giving two long seminars on nonviolence and meditation to an international and Palestinian audience at Holy Land Trust; and a day later, I had the pleasure
of meeting Hafez Jawal, sometimes dubbed the “Palestinian Gandhi” for his nonviolent resistance in the village of At-Tuwani.

What individuals can do, groups can do, and what groups can do, societies and even nations can do. Right now (it’s the ceasefire of early August) people are trying to push for a political solution instead of a military “solution.” But as my friend Sami Awad of Holy Land Trust points out, nothing permanent is going to change without a human solution. Something needs to reassure the Israelis that they will have a safe place to live, and reassure the Palestinians that the world has not abandoned them and they will not be squeezed until the entity of Palestine is wiped off the face of the earth.

That something is nonviolence. Nonviolence can take many forms, and there is an appropriate way to apply it on all these levels: human, societal and, of course, in providing non-military interventions for intrastate conflict, which is now going on in South Sudan, Mindanao, the Caucasus, Latin and North America – all over the world.

But they still are taking place in a kind of cognitive vacuum: even when spectacular episodes of nonviolence occur and succeed they do not resonate with any familiar model in the minds of ordinary people so as to become a real alternative. Supporting the nonviolent work going on in the region and promoting general literacy about the power of nonviolence and what it can do – that would go far toward building the human solution.

Each side has created a monster, it is true: on one side the settlers, half a million of them, who think they’re living out some kind of apocalyptic narrative, and on the other, the terrorist fringes of Hamas, including the Qawasameh clan of Hebron whose murder of the three Israeli boys precipitated the present conflict. I cannot see anything short of nonviolence, applied wherever and however needed, that can counter all this violence, that can strengthen the reasonable people on each side and eventually win back extremists, too. It’s possible, and we have no choice.

Enough cultivation of nonviolence, enough demonstrating that it can be applied in even such a refractory setting as Israel-Palestine, would allow some sanity to emerge on the part of the International community and the United States. That would resolve not only this conflict but, as Meir Margalit, a founder of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, so eloquently said recently, it could go far to “save the human condition.”
Running Orders

They call us now.
Before they drop the bombs.
The phone rings
and someone who knows my first name
calls and says in perfect Arabic
“This is David.”
And in my stupor of sonic booms and glass shattering symphonies
still smashing around in my head
I think “Do I know any Davids in Gaza?”
They call us now to say

Run.

You have 58 seconds from the end of this message.
Your house is next.
They think of it as some kind of
war time courtesy.
It doesn’t matter that
there is nowhere to run to.
It means nothing that the borders are closed
and your papers are worthless
and mark you only for a life sentence
in this prison by the sea
and the alleyways are narrow
and there are more human lives
packed one against the other
more than any other place on earth

Just run.

We aren’t trying to kill you.
It doesn’t matter that
you can’t call us back to tell us
the people we claim to want aren’t in your house
that there’s no one here
except you and your children
who were cheering for Argentina
sharing the last loaf of bread for this week
counting candles left in case the power goes out.
It doesn’t matter that you have children.
You live in the wrong place
and now is your chance to run
to nowhere.
It doesn’t matter
that 58 seconds isn’t long enough
to find your wedding album
or your son’s favorite blanket
or your daughter’s almost completed college application
or your shoes
or to gather everyone in the house.
It doesn’t matter what you had planned.
It doesn’t matter who you are
Prove you’re human.
Prove you stand on two legs.

Poem by Palestinian-American Lena Khalaf Tuffaha on Gaza has been circulating online. Source: http://www.truthdig.com/arts_culture/item/running_orders_poem_palestinian-american_lena_khalaf_tuffaha_gaza_20140729
Sharing Life in Israel-Palestine

Operazione Colomba is a nonviolent civil peace corps. How and why we started our presence in Israel and Palestine

Operation Dove was born in 1992, at the time of the war in Croatia, former Yugoslavia. We wondered what we could do in the face of this terrible tragedy, a few hundred miles from our own homes; how we could help the people who lived there. Frankly, we did not have an answer but we decided, at the least, to not leave them alone. So we simply asked for permission to live on the frontline; some 20 international volunteers living with civilians under the threat of enemy fire. The name Colomba means “dove,” the biblical bird that announces the end of the Great Flood, and peace between sky and earth. Now the “doves” are about 50 volunteers, in Albania, Colombia, Lebanon and Palestine.

By 2001, Operazione Colomba was present in Chiapas and in Chechnya. On September 11, 2001, the day of the attack against the twin towers of New York, a group of 15 fulltime volunteers, almost all Italians, gathered in Italy to contemplate on how to proceed, where to start new nonviolent interventions.

That attack on the economic heart of the West was accepted in the USA and Europe as the occasion for making western countries’ foreign policy even more aggressive and seemed to indicate that Israel was the model to follow: a democracy with free speech and independent media for Israeli citizens only and a foreign policy almost exclusively based on military interventions.

The civilized world was under attack and safety and fear were the key words, the new mantra for the present and future time.

The world was divided according to our governments and on one side was the West, including the Christians and Jews — the guarantors of freedom — while on the other side was the East, including Muslims and terrorists. We were at the dawn of a new crusade. The world was talking about freedom, security, democracy and we were ready to create new widows and orphans for the sake of these goals.

What could we do, as a small, nonviolent group? Which alternative response to violence should we choose? Is there something more extreme and stronger than war? We decided that to go there and live inside the conflict nonviolently would be stronger than any weapon.

Faced with this situation, we made two proposals: we asked to meet with Bin Laden to ask for forgiveness for misdeeds of the West to the Arab world and we decided to establish a presence of Operazione Colomba in the occupied Palestinian territories, in Gaza. In both cases, we have been criticized harshly: evil must be fought in every way... would you have asked for forgiveness even from Hitler?... what do you think you’ll do in Palestine, it’s not Chiapas!... hell awaits you... these wise men said?

No answer from Bin Laden, no possibility to meet him.

This led us, in the middle of the second intifada, to live in the south of the Gaza Strip, near Khan Younis, in a densely populated area with an open confrontation between the Israeli army and Palestinian...
irregular forces. In this way, we go into the middle of a conflict. We experience the risks and challenges faced by civilians caught in the vortex of violence; sharing the life, the home, and the risk of ordinary people suffering violence.

Living with the civilian population, we tried to provide an international monitoring presence. We were assimilated, in some way part of the civilian population. We were part of the international monitoring teams and the goal of our presence was to lower the climate of violence, protect the people from attacks against civilians, and support the poorest families in the conflict. A Palestinian friend often brought his children to our home, saying, “I want them to learn that not all white people are soldiers. I don’t want them to learn to hate.”

After two attempts to kidnap us by the Palestinian side, we decided that the risk of being exploited was too high and moved towards the north of Ramallah, in Aboud.

At that time, Israel began the construction of the Wall, saying that their goal was to stop Palestinian terrorist acts; but in reality they were annexing new territories for Israel and locking an entire population in a prison.

By collecting signatures, presenting petitions, and participating in nonviolent marches along with the local population — Christians and Muslims — we were able to move the route of the wall so that the residents of Aboud didn’t loose their fields and houses. When the Wall became a reality, preventing any contact between the two parties, and after a request from a popular committee of the inhabitants of the hills in the south of Hebron, we started our presence in Twani village, together with Christian Peacemaker Teams. Just as in Aboud, Israeli settlements expanded, stealing Palestinian territories and resources for use by the Jewish inhabitants. The great difference, compared to other areas we had known in Palestine, was that the Committee of the South Hebron Hills — a series of villages scattered over a wide area and fought over by settlers and Israeli soldiers — chose nonviolent struggle. “If we had chosen armed struggle,” said Hafez Huraini, the leader of the committee, “we would be alone now, we should hide most of our activities; having chosen nonviolence, we put our weakness in the hands of the others. We need your help, like international volunteers, and we need even the help of our enemies, the Israelis, who come here and see, understand and support us.”

For nearly ten years, hundreds of volunteers from Operazione Colomba, together with Israeli activists against occupation, escorted Palestinian children to school and shepherds to their pastures, documented arrests and injustice, and were arrested, beaten and expelled from the country. Palestinian, Israeli and international volunteers, in the name of nonviolence, rejoiced, cried, hoped, dreamed, built and lived a full life, even in the midst of a military occupation drama.

Does nonviolent struggle work in Palestine? The inhabitants of At-Tuwani village didn’t become refugees for the umpteenth time, their homes were not demolished, new roads were built, water and electricity arrived. The children, even though there were a number of incidents, can now go to school. Shepherds and farmers don’t have a quiet life, but they can cultivate their fields and follow their flocks. The villages in the South Hebron Hills do not live in peace because the occupation is still not over and the end is not in sight on the horizon, but a path of nonviolence was opened and many other local, popular committees were born and follow this direction. A whole generation of young people has an alternative to hatred.
Tell us what Operazione Colomba is doing in At-Tuwani, South Hebron Hills.

Operazione Colomba enters into a conflict by “sharing life” with the victims. We share our lives with the people who suffer the war’s violence and we don’t leave them alone. This seems so trivial, yet it’s an amazing thing.

Also, Operazione Colomba supports the nonviolent resistance of the South Hebron Hills Popular Committee born in At-Tuwani and which now includes many surrounding villages.

In 1999, twelve Palestinian villages were evacuated from the area by the Israeli army, Palestinian Communities were forcibly deported and forced to move further north, homeless and without any infrastructure. All these people stood in front of a big choice: how to answer the injustice? They chose nonviolent resistance, thanks to some forward-thinking people of the community and with the support of some Israeli activists. If you are alone, under occupation and in a system of substantial injustice you can’t choose nonviolence, it’s very difficult. The strength of nonviolence is that your weakness is put in the hands of others. In fact, without the help of Israeli peace activists and now of Operazione Colomba, this option would not be viable. In addition to allowing people to carry out daily activities and protecting them from violence, I think that Operation Dove creates “space” in a conflict. It’s like when you love someone, you create place for this person, first inside you but then also outside. Operazione Colomba’s presence creates a space in which people can keep doing the things of everyday life but it’s also a space that allows people to think. For example, to develop a nonviolent strategy.

How did Operation Dove get involved in At-Tuwani?

In 2004, the Israeli association, Taayush, and the Palestinian South Hebron Hills Popular Committee have requested a permanent presence of Operazione Colomba in the village.

The Palestinians in the last 50 years suffered so much, and yet - we are told - until 1999, decades of pain couldn’t be witnessed. As if the pain does not exist. Hope is born when someone else has been able to speak about his or her pain. Accompanying Palestinian nonviolent action in this context means to stand beside them in a daily and constant resistance. Each daily activity - grazing herds, going to school, building a well or a house, picking olives or wheat - each of these things is a challenge.

There is the brutality of the military occupation, the human rights’ violations carried out by the Israeli army, the settlers’ violence: any activity becomes very difficult to manage. At-Tuwani is in Area C which is under Israeli civil and military control. This means that the Palestinian civilians are under Israeli military law and they need a permission (often denied by the Israeli Authorities) to build anything, even just a well for water.
What do you do in your role as “stand beside” policy?

Our work is made of three crucial things: sharing, which becomes civilians’ protection; facing, denouncing and monitoring human rights violations; informing and communicating, which is exactly what the Palestinians are asking us: their life stories must be told, and, with our cameras, but also with our emotions and eyes, we have the ‘responsible duty’ of informing.

Nonviolent resistance brings forward three fundamental actions. First: the nonviolent direct action. For example, to build a school during the night because despite the fact that all of the documents have been delivered accurate and on time, you have not got the permission. The men built the school “illegally” at night, and women taught “illegally” in the day.

Here every aspect of life is a nonviolent direct action, even plowing a field near a Israeli settlement, harvesting the olives, waiting at a check point, going to school. Trying to live free is nonviolent direct action and this is free from fear and anger. Then there’s the legal action: each time an unjust measure is imposed, like a demolition order, Palestinians make an appeal: a legal fight to defend the legitimacy of living on their own land. And finally there is the advocacy to raise awareness, inform.

There are three actors of this mechanism: the Palestinians, Operazione Colomba, the Israeli associations. Each with its own role.

What are the implications and results of the nonviolent resistance?

At-Tuwani now has a clinic, a school, has paved roads, electricity, the connection with the water pipe and it will soon have a kindergarten. It even has a town plan where buildings have received a permit by the Israeli authority. This is the result of 13 years of nonviolent struggles. At Twani is crucial because it has been shown that nonviolence works. If you see with your own eyes women who disarm a soldier with the power of nonviolence, you see how this can break the plans. A soldier is not ready for all of that, the violence is not ready for nonviolence. Nonviolent action moves the plane of the comparison, and this thing is able to create a short circuit, even outside of the closed circle where it occurs, it is a multiplying factor.

Why does the media not spread these experiences?

Unfortunately, the message that comes very often is Palestinians are “terrorists.” The Palestinians know that this public opinion is shared by many. If At-Tuwani and all the villages had chosen violence, it would be a “good excuse” to cancel everything, there would be no Palestinians in that area, which is one of the poorest and most populated territories of the West Bank. Today, these Palestinians don’t give any justification for the Israeli army to use violence, and are excluded from the media circus. And then nonviolence is powerful and scares those who hold the power.
The South Hebron Hills area is in the southern part of the West Bank. It is located at the edge of the Negev desert between the town of Yatta and the Green Line, which is the 1949 armistice line separating Israel from the Occupied Palestinian Territories. It is also called Masafer Yatta (south of Yatta) and is one of the West Bank’s poorest, driest and most socially-excluded areas. Approximately 4000 people living in some 30 different villages inhabit it. According to the Oslo accords, it is part of Area C and, as such, is under complete Israeli civil and military control.

Because of the absolute prohibition of building imposed by the Civil Administration of Israel, in many of these villages, especially in the smallest and poorest ones, families still live in caves dug into the rock or in tents. People live mostly off of the exiguous products of sheep-farming and agriculture; whatever is possible to get from a semi-desert land. Families, usually very large, live by selling fresh milk and leban (fresh or dried cheese, made from goat’s milk) or animals for slaughter at Yatta’s market. Because of the difficulties created by the Israeli military and the civil occupation, daily work activities are becoming more and more difficult to carry out. Hence the Palestinians, primarily the men, need to work in Israel for very low wages and, everyday, must face obstacles to their movement.

These people’s lives are very simple. They are deeply tied to the land and nature, and made up of daily, seasonal activities: grazing, sowing, harvesting, milk processing, cereal milling, each following one another according to the time of year. Since very few families own a tractor and most of the agricultural land is located on areas too difficult to be reached by machines, almost all the work is still carried out by hand.

Settlements, settlers and violence against Palestinians

Area C is scattered by Israeli settlements, which are illegal according to international law. Speaking of which, a clarification is needed: the Israeli law distinguishes between legal settlements and illegal outposts, whereas international law considers both of them as illegal. The outposts are little settlements at an embryonic stage, usually composed of a few trailers or containers. In the South Hebron Hills area there are eight settlements and/or outposts: Ma’on, Karmel, Suseya, Havat Ma’on, Avigaiyl, Mitpe Yair, Suseya northwest, and the ancient synagogue of Suseya. The settlers living there are generally considered national-religious settlers, i.e. religious extremists who strongly believe Israel is a holy land given to Jewish people by God. They consider all the occupied Palestinian territories, historically and religiously, as part of Israel, the Great Israel (Eretz Israel).

Given these circumstances and taking into account the opposition to peace talks, it is possible to consider the increasing violence in the area as a consequence of the recent negotiations. Moreover, Operation Dove (OD) volunteers noticed a greater connivance of the army with settlers. District Coordination Office
commander of the area, representing the Civil Administration, changed in 2013. By the way, the connivance issue has always been a reason for worry. As noticed by Talya Sasson in her report to the Knesset: The security concept, that wherever there is an Israeli person — IDF will be there to protect him, resulted in a very sad reality. Therefore, any settler who places his home wherever he chooses, even if unauthorized and against the law — gains the protection of the army. The outcome is that the settlers are the ones who set the army’s deployment in the territories, not the army. Everyone is king. In order to protect one outpost, forces must be taken out of other places. The forces are not unlimited, and so the security level drops down. The protection supplied by IDF to unauthorized outposts, its mere existence there, drags it unwillingly to give its ‘seal’ to unauthorized outposts.

(T. Sasson, Summary on the opinion concerning unauthorized outposts, 2005)

This is the case with one of the outposts in the South Hebron Hills, Avigayl, which is ‘protected’ by Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers 24 hours a day, although it is illegal even under Israeli law.

Something seemed to change on September 22, 2012, after a hot and violent summer, when eventually the IDF decided to take action. During a peace march organized by the South Hebron Hills Popular Committee, some masked settlers from Havat Ma’on came out from the woods surrounding their outpost and provoked international volunteers, and Israeli and Palestinian activists as well, by throwing stones at them with slingshots and verbally offending them. The impunity they were used to didn’t work that time, especially when they targeted other Israelis, who immediately called the police. When the police arrived, the settlers ran off; the policemen ran after them and caught one of the violent settlers and arrested another one the day after. Although it was a remarkable episode, it has regrettably remained a single and isolated one.

The settlers’ strategy consists of creating “no go zones” for Palestinians on Palestinian land by attacking and scaring shepherds and farmers in order to prevent them from working on their private property. The settlers from Havat Ma’on outpost frequently attack the Palestinians: their aim is to make daily life unbearable so that the Palestinians themselves would decide to leave. Since 2004, OD volunteers have witnessed violence and abuses against Palestinian people and property. Havat Ma’on settlers’ crimes have always been unpunished. That encourages them to think that there is no reason why they should stop committing human rights violations. In July 2013, Yesh Din (Yesh Din is an Israeli volunteer organization working to defend the human rights of the Palestinian civilian population under Israeli occupation)
published a data sheet about its monitoring of Police investigation of offenses against Palestinians between 2005 and 2013, and proved that the vast majority of inquiries, about 84%, were closed due to police investigation failures (Only 8.5% of investigations into offenses committed by Israelis against Palestinians end in indictment; 84% of files are closed due to police investigation failures).

From the beginning of April 2012 until the end of July, OD volunteers registered an increase of violence coming from Havat Ma’on settlers. In this period, more than 58 harassment and/or violent actions were committed against Palestinians, Israeli activists and international volunteers. Here is some data collected in 2013, compared with data collected the previous year:

during 2013, settlers have attacked (overt violence) local inhabitants 28 times (24 the previous year); they harassed them 129 times (119 the previous year) and they have damaged properties or killed animals 155 times (121 the previous year).

One of the settlers’ main targets are the olive trees. The reason for this is that the olive trees are a fundamental part of the Palestinian sustainable economy and have a high economic value. For instance in 2013, on the 10th of May, 62 olive trees were broken by settlers as a result of a price tag attack. The settlers broke the trees at night and wrote on a wall nearby, the sentence, “price tag for those who steal.” The “price tag” attacks are an act of violence aimed at the Palestinian population and Israeli security forces. They generally follow actions by Israeli authorities that are perceived as harming the settlement enterprise, or follow Palestinian violence against settlers.

In total, OD volunteers registered 264 olive trees cut, damaged and/or broken throughout the years 2011-2013.

**Settlements expansion**

The settlers’ violence problem increases proportionately to the expansion of settlements and outposts, becoming more and more worrying. According to *The Times of Israel*:

New construction in the West Bank skyrocketed in 2013 compared to 2012, new Israeli data revealed on Monday. The Central Bureau of Statistics reported an increase of 123% in construction of new homes in the West Bank in 2013 compared to 2012, a ratio dramatically higher than in the other six districts examined. The southern district, coming in second, witnessed an increase of 12%, Haifa 8%, Jerusalem 3%, central Israel 2%, and northern Israel 1%. New construction in the Tel Aviv

Volunteers monitor the way that Palestinian children pass through every day to go to school, escorted by Israeli soldiers because of the threat of being attacked by the Israeli settlers. Image@Operazione Colomba
district dropped 19% between 2012 and 2013... According to the Israeli numbers, there were 2,534 new housing starts in the West Bank in 2013, compared to 1,133 units in 2012. (Times of Israel: Settlement construction more than doubled in 2013. http://www.timesofisrael.com/settlement-construction-more-than-doubled-in-2013/)

Between 1993 and 2012, the number of settlers tripled. Peaks in growth are recorded simultaneously with Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. It’s a feature of Israel’s political landscape that nearly every prime minister who has engaged in negotiations with Palestinians has also thrown a bone to the settlers and their supporters in order to prevent a collapse of his coalition government. (http://www.csmonitor.com/Photo-Galleries/Infographics/Why-do-Israeli-settlements-expand-more-during-peace-talks#728771)

Such data have been confirmed again in 2013, with the resumption of peace talks. Indeed, if in August, the expansion budget reserved for the settlements was 58 million NIS (New Israeli Shekel), in December, it was raised to 614 million NIS, in other words ten times more. (Israel increases settlements expansion budget 10 fold: https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/middle-east/8712-israel-increase-settlements-expansion-budget-10-fold)

OD monitoring activities confirm this trend: from the data collected, it can be seen that settlers built, between November 2012 to October 2013, at least 11 new houses in an expansion of Ma’on settlement, and Havat Ma’on and Avigayil outposts (it amounted to 2 the previous year). Furthermore, a new road that surrounds the northwest of Ma’on settlement has been built thanks to public funds.

Despite the general indifference shown to the Israeli-Palestine question by the international community, some good news came on July 2013, when the European Union directive stating that all future agreements between the EU and Israel must explicitly exclude Jewish colonies in the West Bank or East Jerusalem. The new EU guidelines prohibit the issuing of grants, funding, prizes or scholarships unless a settlement exclusion clause is included. Israeli institutions and bodies situated across the pre-1967 Green Line will be automatically ineligible. In order to secure agreements with the EU in the future, the Israeli government will be required to concede in writing that settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are outside the state of Israel. The directive, part of the 2014-20 financial framework, covers all areas of co-operation between the EU and Israel, including economics, science, culture, sports and academia. (EU takes tougher stance on Israeli settlements)
http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/16/eu-israel-settlement-exclusion-clause

At-Tuwani village

About 300 people live in At-Tuwani: it is the biggest village in the whole area and the only one hosting a small grocer, a mosque and a clinic (open only one day per week). Thanks to the nonviolent resistance At-Tuwani’s inhabitants are engaging in, the families in the village have gained the possibility of benefiting from a controversial master plan. The inhabitants have the chance to gradually leave their caves, which have turned into menageries for animals, and build real brick dwellings. Notwithstanding, people in At-Tuwani are only allowed to build inside the historical borders of the village. Therefore, many houses outside the borders are now under demolition order and could be torn down at any time. Moreover, the population in the village has started growing in the last few years thanks to the atmosphere of confidence created by the successes of the non-violent resistance strategy and the consistent presence of international for the permits to build outside the borders as well, letting the village expand according to the natural rate of population growth.

Despite the strict and illegal occupation, a few real and crucial enhancements can be pointed out. After years of strong nonviolent struggles, At-Tuwani has achieved two very important goals: since 2011, there is running water in the houses and since August 2010, the village has been connected to the Palestinian power network coming from Yatta. However, it must be mentioned that rigorous water quotas are imposed on Palestinians; moreover, supply is often restricted, leaving the Palestinian communities without water for considerable periods. Heavy fines punish excess pumping. Finally, Palestinians are forced to pay extortionate rates for their water supply. Whereas settlers pay $0.40 per cubic meter for domestic consumption and a highly subsidized rate of $0.16 for agricultural use, Palestinians pay a standard rate of $1.20 for their piped water (according to J. Isaac, Core Issues of the Palestinian-Israeli water dispute, 1995).

So the Palestinians are still compelled to use wells, which is not as easy as it would seem. First of all, since the Palestinians have to ask the civil administration for the permits to renew old wells, many of them are unusable. In addition, since many of the wells in the South Hebron Hills are too close to the settlements and the outposts, it’s too risky even to approach the area. Finally, settlers target many other wells, trying to make them unusable by poisoning the water.

In the bigger picture, the next frontier in the South Hebron Hills area will be to bring electricity and running water from At-Tuwani to the other villages too. Some of them have already been provided with electricity, thanks to an energy project supported by the German-Israeli association, Comet-ME, which has installed solar panels and wind power blades. Even though it has been an important result, it should be understood that these installations providing electricity are under a demolition order and could be demolished at any time.

Israeli military occupation

According to the Oslo Accords, the whole area of Masafer Yatta is classified as “Area C.” That means that it is under full Israeli military and civil control. From a military point of view, this implies that there are a large number of army vehicles patrolling the area night and day. There are many ‘flying’ checkpoints placed at the points where the Palestinian streets, connecting the South Hebron Hills area to the town of Yatta, cross the bypass road n° 317, an Israeli restricted area reserved only for Israeli citizens. During these blockades, the army often keeps Palestinian vehicles stationary for a long time as they conduct exhaustive checks of the vehicles and the passengers’ documents. During these checks, soldiers often abuse their power, violating Palestinians’ human rights. In such cases there is no difference between men, women and children: they are all the target of humiliation, harassment and threats.

It’s important to emphasize that no separation wall has been built on the southern border between the West Bank and Israel, only 10 km away from At-Tuwani, whereas the wall has been built on almost every other stretch of the Green Line. Therefore, it is actually the only point in which the boundaries can be crossed to avoid the border checks.
of the Israeli police. In order to be allowed to enter Israel, Palestinian residents in the West Bank have to get a regular authorization from the Israeli government; these permits are rarely issued though, and only to those who can show a regular contract of employment in Israel. But most Palestinians do not have this: they are occasionally employed by construction companies or farms in periods of more intense activity. In these cases, a Palestinian needs to enter Israel immediately in order to start working and the only way to do that is to cross the border clandestinely. For this reason, many vehicles driving southward from Yatta to At-Tuwani, and then toward the Green Line and beyond, are Palestinian workers’ cars going to Israel. The army checks and blockades often aim to find these vehicles. Therefore, it is not unusual to see sudden car chases, seizures or arrests in the village. The heavy presence of armed forces in this area is made worse by the presence of a military training area in the southern end: the so-called “Firing Zone 918.”

Firing Zone 918

The area of Firing Zone 918 encompasses twelve Palestinian villages with some 1000 inhabitants: Tuba, al-Mufaqarah, Isfey, Maghayir al-Abeed, al-Majaz, at-Tabban, al-Fakheit, Halaweih, Mirkez, Jinba, Kharoubeh and Sarura. In the early 1970s, Israel declared the area a ‘closed military area’. As a consequence of this, in 1999, Israeli military forces, accompanied by Civil Administration officials, expelled the residents. To protest the expulsion, the inhabitants petitioned the Israeli High Court of Justice which issued a temporary injunction allowing people to return to their houses and forbidding the state to expel them pending a final decision. Notwithstanding, life for Palestinian communities in the area worsened because of the destruction of private properties during the eviction, the expansion of settlements, and the ongoing violence committed by settlers. Furthermore, the military and Civil Administration carried out demolition orders and delivered stop working orders, preventing the construction of new houses and the renovation of the old ones. (B’tselem’s report: “Means of expulsion. Violence, Harassment and Lawlessness against Palestinians in the Southern Hebron Hills” http://www.btselem.org/download/200507_south_mount_hebron_eng.pdf)

In April 2012, the Israeli Court resumed their deliberation of the case. On July 19, 2012, the state, following Ministry of Defense instructions, submitted a detailed notification to the Court in which it claimed that the petitioners are not “permanent residents” of the firing zone area and hence have no right to live there. On August 7, 2012, the Court decided that the state’s announcement constituted “a change in the normative situation” and, as a consequence, the specific petitions “were no longer relevant” and so dismissed the case. Therefore, a new petition has been submitted by the lawyers of the Palestinians on January 16, 2013, to the High Court of Justice. If the Court rejects the inhabitants’ petition, residents of eight of the twelve villages could be evicted. In this case the Israeli authorities could make decisions that would be against International Common Law. Israel claimed that after the end of the Second Lebanon War (2006) security levels increased and, as a consequence, troops needed to return to regular training: that meant the necessity for more firing zones, including the one in the Masafer Yatta area.

By the way, the Israeli military requirement has no direct relation with the occupation because it refers to IDF general trainings and, as such, according to international law, it is not a ‘military need’. This means that the measures that could be taken would be unlawful because they are not permitted under the Hague Regulations and would constitute grave breaches of the IV Geneva Convention. According to international law, ‘military general training’ can’t, for any reason, be considered as a military need. Consequently, if a firing zone for general military training is established, according to International Humanitarian Law (IHL), it would not justify expropriations or movement restrictions in the twelve villages. Article 46 of the Hague Declaration states that private property must be respected and it cannot be confiscated. Also, destruction of private property for the establishment of a firing zone, intended for military trainings, cannot be justified because it does not constitute a military need. Under these circumstances, the expected destruction of the villages for the purpose of using Firing Zone 918 would constitute a clear violation of article 53 of the IV Geneva Convention and would amount to a grave breach according to article 147. Finally, in the matter of prohibition of forcible transfer, IHL does not differentiate between permanent and non-permanent residents as Israeli legislation does.

In December 2013, the cam-
aign, “This Must Be the Place” for the abolition of the Firing Zone 918 was launched (according to: This Must be the Place campaign: http://nofiring-zone918.org/). The campaign has been possible thanks to the international actors working in the area, including OD volunteers, who began to systematically visit the families living in the concerned villages, and monitor their situation. The promoters of the campaign are the Popular Struggle Coordination Committee, the South Hebron Hills Popular Committee, Operation Dove, International Solidarity Movement, Christian Peacemakers teams, Ta’ayush, Alternative Information Centre and Com-et-ME.

During the last hearing, on October 4, 2013, the High Court of Justice proposed a mediation, conducted by Judge Yitzhak Zamir, between the State of Israel and the inhabitants of Firing Zone 918. While the Palestinians immediately accepted the proposal, Israel took some time to think about it. Finally, on October 21, the state attorney notified the High Court of Justice that the Minister of Defense agreed to enter mediation on the legal dispute about the fate of the Palestinian residents. The mediation is still ongoing.

Demolitions, military violence and aggressions

The military occupation uses numerous other means to be invasive in the Palestinian territories. As already mentioned, many Palestinian villages are located in Area C, under full Israeli civil and military control. In such areas, every construction project must be approved by the Israeli civil administration. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Occupied Palestinian Territories (OCHA oPt), 70% of Area C is off-limits to Palestinian construction, 29% is heavily restricted and less than 1% has been assigned by the Israeli Civil Administration for Palestinian development. The Israeli administration interferes with every single Palestinian activity, causing daily difficulties.

During 2013, soldiers set up 67 temporary check-points (47 the previous year) stopping and checking 388 adults and 59 children. The way they commonly act — disrespectful, aggressive and fierce — is a breach of several fundamental rights. First of all, it is a violation of the freedom of movement. Furthermore it is a violation of the right to a

At-Tuwani village. Image@Cristiano Freschi
dignified life. Finally, since children are treated as adults, it also represents a violation of children’s rights.

During the same period, the DCO (District Coordination Office) delivered 26 demolition orders and 63 stop working orders (88 and 24 the previous year, respectively). Taking into account the explanations given before, this means that Palestinians have to ask for permits in order to build new constructions and renew structures already built. These permits are usually denied. Moreover, they constantly live under demolition risk, carried out by companies escorted by the army.

But the military occupation doesn’t stop here. The soldiers are often called by the settlers, in order to do the dirty work on their behalf. Thus, soldiers often are active on the ground chasing away Palestinians and their flocks; preventing farmers from harvesting, plowing and seed plowing and seeding. Finally, they detain and arrest Palestinians when the latter try to defend their own rights.

South Hebron Hills Palestinians and the Nonviolent Popular Resistance: The South Hebron Hills Palestinians have chosen to resist the occupation through nonviolent means. The next section explores how they have organized this resistance.

South Hebron Hills Popular Committee: The South Hebron Hills Popular Committee was born in the late 90s after the evictions due to Firing Zone 918. The Palestinian residents of the area, supported by some Israeli associations, began a movement founded on nonviolence. The men from At-Tuwani and villages nearby decided to react to the consistent injustices: they organized a real form of popular resistance. They gave life to the South Hebron Hills Popular Committee, a group in which the representatives of all the villages in the area gather with the aim of reacting to the Israeli occupation through forms of nonviolent resistance. Over the years, the Committee has been coordinating nonviolent demonstrations, such as protest marches and demonstrative actions. The latter usually consist of grazing animals and working the land in dangerous places near the settlements and outposts. Sometimes they are spontaneous actions organized quickly to face emergencies, during which men, women and children play an active, nonviolent role. With the involvement and the support of local media and Operation
Dove, the Committee carries out advocacy work in an attempt to draw public opinion’s attention to the living conditions of Palestinian communities in this area. In 2013, thanks also to Operation Dove’s presence, the area was visited by 637 people who had the possibility to see, touch and feel what is going on in the South Hebron Hills. Delegations and visitors came from all over the world, including such countries as: Italy, the United Kingdom, Poland, the Netherlands, the US, France, Australia, Palestine, Spain, Sweden and Israel. The previous year, in 2012, 847 people visited the area, coming from Europe and the US, but also from Japan, India, Canada, Argentina, Israel, among others.

The Cooperative of women

Thanks to the initiative of one of the women in At-Tuwani — who was born and grew up in the town of Yatta but then moved when she was sixteen upon her marriage to a man formed a cooperative. The initial idea was to allow women to gather in order to discuss their problems and become emancipated from their condition of financial and cultural inferiority. Since some men in the village were against this idea, women started gathering under the pretext of creating some manufactured articles to offer for sale. Thanks to the numerous groups of internationals who visit At-Tuwani every year, women have the possibility to sell their manufactured articles. The revenue is used to meet other community needs. Today, the Cooperative is unanimously accepted and made up of more than thirty women who regularly meet to organize their activities. The same women came up with the idea of building a kindergarten in the village; construction work began this year (March 2014).

Popular Struggle Coordination Committee: Bab Al-Shams and Melh Al-Ard

From a nonviolent point of view, 2013 has been a very remarkable year: almost all of the popular committees of the Country joined together with the intent to move forward their nonviolent strategy. They created the Popular Struggle Coordination Committee and organized the first big joint-action: Bab Al-Shams.

On January 11, 2013, about 300 Palestinians, accompanied by international and Israeli activists, gathered near Jerusalem in order to give life to Bab Al-Shams village. It was built in an area defined by the occupying power as E1, which is an area of about 13 square km that falls on confiscated Palestinian land east of Jerusalem, between Ma’ale Adumim settlement and Jerusalem. A few months earlier, Israel announced its intention to build approximately 4000 settlement housing units there. The action was intended to show Israel it can’t do whatever it wants because there are women and men who won’t remain in silence and will fight for their rights. A statement from the Popular Struggle Coordination Committee declared:

We, the sons and daughters of Palestine from all throughout the land, announce the establishment of Bab Al-Shams Village (Gate of the Sun). We the people, without permits from the occupation, without permission from anyone, sit here today because this is our land and it is our right to inhabit it.......

Left: Al-Fakheit village: Palestinian child going to school. Right: Al-Majaz village. A little Palestinian shepherd comes back home after having grazed his flock. Image@Cristiano Freschi.
We will not remain silent as settlement expansion and confiscation of our land continues. Therefore we hereby establish the village of Bab Al-Shams to proclaim our faith in direct action and popular resistance. (Palestinians establish new village — Bab Al Shams, ‘Gate of the Sun’ — in occupied E1)

In the evening, Israeli forces went to the camp and delivered an eviction order. By Sunday the 13th, in the declared interests of Israeli security, the Israeli army had broken up the camp. The following Tuesday, a smaller group of activists returned to plant olive trees on the site, resulting in 20 arrests. The second big joint-action was on January 31, 2014. Hundreds of Palestinians, coordinated by the Popular Struggle Coordination Committee, came from many Palestinian villages and cities, including the South Hebron Hills area.

In the first two days, work was done to clean the area, repair the old houses and dig a path to access the old village. During the nights the Palestinian and international activists gathered together to celebrate these reviving actions. During the first day, Israeli border police and the army monitored the area, driving jeeps around the village and sometimes standing on the hill nearby. On the second day, Israeli forces came to the entrances of the village and, on at least four occasions, tried to stop the cars that were bringing water and food to the people in the village. On these instances, groups of Palestinians went towards the stopped vehicles and took the supplies for the village, in spite of the soldier’s attempt to stop them. At the beginning of the second night, some Israeli border police cars stopped near the village with lights and sirens, while some soldiers began patrolling the woods with flashlights in groups of four. Some flares were launched from the street, lighting up the whole area. The Israeli army cleaned out the village during the night between the 6th and the 7th of February. At least 31 Palestinians were injured during the raid.

**Conclusion**

Although these nonviolent actions and petitions have been cut short by Israeli forces or thwarted in the courts by the state, they have been powerful examples of cooperation, coordination and unity. These actions have become symbols of hope for Palestinians and create the promise of more nonviolent initiatives with positive outcomes in the future.
Film Review

“Peace, Propaganda, and the Promised Land” illustrates US Media & the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Available to watch for free on Films For Action:

http://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/peace_propaganda_and_the_promised_land/

At the Metta Center, the heart of our Roadmap framework is Person Power, the unlimited capacity within the individual. In our 5-point program for discovering person power, we emphasize the importance of freeing yourself from the corporate mass media in order to untap your capacity for nonviolence. “Peace, Propaganda and the Promised Land” helps to illustrate why we advocate for this, namely the old story of separation, violence, and competition that the mass media portrays and the dehumanization embedded within.

Although this documentary was released in 2004, it remains equally relevant today, particularly in light of the recent violence in Gaza and the related media coverage. “Peace, Propaganda and the Promised Land” examines the influential role the US media plays in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and brings to light the differences between the US and international media coverage. The film discusses how the conflict is not only being waged on the ground, but also through the mainstream media outlets.

A number of issues are brought up with respect to US media coverage of the conflict. First of all, the film highlights the lack of Palestinian voices portrayed in the mainstream news. The film also shows how media outlets require journalists to use specific terminology, for example, referring to “Jewish neighborhoods” in the West Bank or Gaza rather than “settlements” or “colonies” as they are often described in the international press. It also discusses how the US media coverage tends to leave out the word “occupation,” which tends to be used in international coverage, and fails to address the issue of the root causes of the violence. Also discussed is how the onus is usually placed on the Palestinians, when the coverage portrays the violence as Israel “retaliating” to Palestinian “attacks.”

A very important discussion surrounds the dehumanization of Palestinians in media coverage, and how they are more often portrayed as numbers rather than individuals who left grieving families behind. In contrast, the film shows many instances in which the stories of Israeli victims of violence are told, including the background of the victims and their grieving families. The US media rarely portrays such stories about the Palestinian lives that are lost in the conflict. The film also discu-
usses how the word “terrorist” is often used to describe Palestinians.

More broadly speaking, the film examines media bias in general. The film explores the US media landscape and how the media filters the news through institutional relationships, namely the corporations that own the media outlets and the political elite. The film features commentary by numerous journalists and scholars, including Noam Chomsky and Rabbi Michael Lerner.

**Post-viewing extension:**

After watching the film, look for examples of the film’s main points in current coverage of the conflict. Analyze examples from the US corporate mainstream media, US alternative media, and international media outlets in their coverage of the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Choose one US mainstream source (Fox, CNN, MSNBC, CBS, NBC, etc.), one US alternative source (Democracy Now!, YES! Magazine, Alternet, etc.) and one international source (BBC, Al Jazeera, The Guardian, etc.). If possible, try to find coverage of the same story or event.

- Notice any key words or phrases from the documentary, such as: settlement, occupation, attack, retaliation, terrorist, etc.
- Notice in what context these words are being used (which party are they being used to describe)?
- If the story involves deaths, notice how these deaths are portrayed (Are they just numbers? Are the victims humanized in any way? Are their stories told?)
- Whose voices are being heard in the story?
- What is being left out?
- What is the underlying narrative, both about the conflict and about humanity in general, that the story is portraying?

See the Center for Media Literacy resource below for additional questions and resources for analysis.

**Additional resources**

**Media Education Foundation**
http://www.mediaed.org/cgi-bin/commerce.cgi?display=home

The producers of the film, this organization creates educational videos about media, culture and society for the classroom, with topics including gender, race, health, politics and consumerism. In addition to films on these topics available for purchase, the web site also includes discussion guides, handouts and transcripts.

**Center for Media Literacy**
http://www.medialit.org/reading-room/five-key-questions-form-foundation-media-inquiry

The Center for Media Literacy (CML) is “dedicated to promoting and supporting media literacy education as a framework for accessing, analyzing, evaluating, creating and participating with media content,” and “works to help citizens, especially the young, develop critical thinking and media production skills needed to live fully in the 21st century media culture.” Of particular interest are the Five Key Questions for media inquiry (see link above).

**Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR)**
http://fair.org/

FAIR is a media watch group that offers criticism of media bias and censorship. Its web site includes FAIR TV, an analysis of current events coverage, and a monthly magazine. The August 8 episode of FAIR TV begins with an example and critique of US media coverage over the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict, much as is described in the documentary: http://bit.ly/1vy8lx1

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